

## How may autistic individuals experience suicidality?

It is difficult to explain how autistic individuals experience suicidality as all autistic individuals are different and have different needs. However, research suggests that autistic individuals may experience different warning signs of suicidality in comparison to non-autistic individuals.

### Research Summary:

In Cassidy et al.'s (2022) study, only 32% of autistic individuals communicated their suicidal thoughts verbally to another person before making an attempt on their life. Therefore, it is important to remember that autistic individuals may not communicate suicidal ideation in the way that people may expect.

A study involving 462 parents of autistic youth found that the most commonly reported behavioural characteristics of older youth and young adults (11–25-year-olds) were physical and verbal aggression (Vasa et al., 2020) during periods of suicidal ideation.

Autistic individuals are more likely to select lethal methods for suicide attempts than the general population (Kato et al., 2013; Takara & Kondo, 2014).

### Warning Signs of Suicidality in Autistic People:

Autistic people who are experiencing suicidality might:

- Lose interest in special interests or hobbies
- Change their normal communication style by either becoming more communicative or less communicative
- Spend more time online accessing information related to suicidality
- Describing that they have 'no words' or that they feel numb
- Increase self-harm
- Talk about feeling hopeless or having no reason for living

The Here to Help 'resources', which include but are not limited to, website, information sheets, and in person workshops are intended to provide general information only. The 'resources' provided by 'Here to Help' do not replace, or supersede, professional and/or medical advice. Users should take professional advice before taking action which contradicts previous medical guidance. So far as permissible by law, SJOG does not accept any liability related to individual's use or interpretation of the 'resources' provided.

Whilst we have selected some resources from other organisations which we believe will be helpful, we accept no liability for the content of these resources.'

Although SJOG have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that the 'resources' provided are accurate, neither SJOG or any of its employees, can be held responsible for the direct or indirect actions taken by users following engagement with Here to Help 'resources'.

- Speak more about death and suicide
- Experience worse symptoms of depression or anxiety
- Experience perseverative thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Professionals who work with autistic individuals in crisis should ensure that they are listening literally their clients. Autistic clients may say that they are experiencing suicidal ideation but their body language and facial expressions may not align with your preconceptions of how someone in crisis will behave. This means we need to have an open mind and avoid preconceptions of how someone will present.

### References:

Cassidy, S., Au-Yeung, S., Robertson, A., Cogger-Ward, H., Richards, G., Allison, C., Bradley, L., Kenny, R., O'Connor, R., Mosse, D., Rodgers, J., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2022). Autism and autistic traits in those who died by suicide in England. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 221(5), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2022.21>

Kato, K., Mikami, K., Akama, F., Yamada, K., Maehara, M., Kimoto, K., Kimoto, K., Sato, R., Takahashi, Y., Fukushima, R., Ichimura, A., & Matsumoto, H. (2013). Clinical features of suicide attempts in adults with autism spectrum disorders. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 35(1), 50–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.genhosppsych.2012.09.006>

Takara, K., & Kondo, T. (2014). Comorbid atypical autistic traits as a potential risk factor for suicide attempts among adult depressed patients: a case-control study. *Annals of General Psychiatry*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12991-014-0033-z>

Vasa, R. A., Hagopian, L., & Kalb, L. G. (2019). Investigating Mental Health Crisis in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Research*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2224>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO2H0QZm9\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO2H0QZm9_o)

The Here to Help 'resources', which include but are not limited to, website, information sheets, and in person workshops are intended to provide general information only. The 'resources' provided by 'Here to Help' do not replace, or supersede, professional and/or medical advice. Users should take professional advice before taking action which contradicts previous medical guidance. So far as permissible by law, SJOG does not accept any liability related to individual's use or interpretation of the 'resources' provided.

Whilst we have selected some resources from other organisations which we believe will be helpful, we accept no liability for the content of these resources.'

Although SJOG have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that the 'resources' provided are accurate, neither SJOG or any of its employees, can be held responsible for the direct or indirect actions taken by users following engagement with Here to Help 'resources'.

The Here to Help 'resources', which include but are not limited to, website, information sheets, and in person workshops are intended to provide general information only. The 'resources' provided by 'Here to Help' do not replace, or supersede, professional and/or medical advice. Users should take professional advice before taking action which contradicts previous medical guidance. So far as permissible by law, SJOG does not accept any liability related to individual's use or interpretation of the 'resources' provided.

Whilst we have selected some resources from other organisations which we believe will be helpful, we accept no liability for the content of these resources.'

Although SJOG have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that the 'resources' provided are accurate, neither SJOG or any of its employees, can be held responsible for the direct or indirect actions taken by users following engagement with Here to Help 'resources'.